

---

***Sudba reformy: Russkoe krestianstvo v pravitelstvennoi politike do i posle otmeny krepostnogo prava (1830–1890-e gg.)*** by I. A. Khristoforov

Review by: Tracy Dennison

*Slavic Review*, Vol. 72, No. 2 (SUMMER 2013), pp. 410–412

Published by:

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5612/slavicreview.72.2.0410>

Accessed: 04/10/2013 18:05

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at  
<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Slavic Review*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

dence now available, Parppei concludes that the monastery was founded at the end of the fourteenth or early fifteenth century. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, those who sought to tell the history of the monastery had to speculate and draw on various traditions to reconstruct its history. The author places this interest in history in the broader context of the rise of interest in history connected with the development of ideas of the nation. It was also the age of forging “ancient” documents (such as James MacPherson’s *Ossian*), and Valaam was no exception here either: the amateur historian and collector A. I. Sulakadzev wrote a history of the monastery in 1818 that cited manuscripts that did not exist and, like MacPherson, also claimed to draw on oral traditions that are now impossible to untangle from his forgeries. Nevertheless, Sulakadzev’s work was very influential and later authors drew upon it in shaping the history of Valaam. Parppei notes that the monastery was cautious about Sulakadzev in its own publications but did not object to more popularized histories produced by outsiders that drew upon these mythical elements, accepting this “mythhistory” for popular consumption.

Those who created the image of Valaam drew upon a variety of sources including saints’ lives and chronicles that sought to associate the monastery with a venerable and ancient history. Not only was there a legend about the Apostle Andrew visiting the island and destroying pagan temples, but one saint who ostensibly became a monk there was believed to have lived at the time of Vladimir’s conversion. Hence some of the histories of Valaam claimed that the monastery existed even before the Christianization of Russia and was therefore the “oldest” in Russia. Such legends are repeated in literature for pilgrims to this day.

This mythic history served the monastery in numerous ways: not only did it provide it with a venerable and ancient history, but it also associated the monastery with missionary activity and conversion to Christianity—a legacy that the monastery continued in the border region of Karelia. Second, the various saints claimed to have resided at Valaam before going on to found other monasteries boosted its reputation for holiness but also served to strengthen symbolic ties with Karelian monasteries and their founders. Finally, different mythic components appealed to different contingents: notions that one of the founders, Sergii, was Greek not only served to tie the monastery to Greek and Athonite spirituality, but also later served Karelian and Finnish Orthodox (who also claimed that the other founder, German, was Karelian) in claiming the monastery as not exclusively Russian.

This book will appeal not only to those who work on religious history but also to those with interests in historiography and the construction of national images, as well as those concerned with Russia’s relations with its northern neighbors.

SCOTT KENWORTHY  
Miami University, Ohio

***Sud’ba reformy: Russkoe krest’ianstvo v pravitel’svennoi politike do i posle otmeny krepostnogo prava (1830–1890-e gg.).*** By I. A. Khristoforov. Moscow: Izdatel’stvo “Sobranie,” 2011. 367 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Hard bound.

In this impressive new book, Igor’ Khristoforov assesses the impact of the 1861 emancipation legislation on rural Russia. How successful were the state’s attempts to reform the countryside in the mid-nineteenth century? “Not very” is the answer to emerge from this compelling account. According to Khristoforov, the legislation was fraught with contradictions and ambiguities, resulting from attempts to reconcile the reformers’ diverse ideological positions within a set of institutional and fis-

cal constraints. This half-baked legislative compromise, forged by members of a ruling elite who understood few of the challenges faced by peasants, exacerbated rural underdevelopment and thus facilitated the emergence of the even more ideologically motivated “counter-reforms” of the 1870s. This string of failed attempts to improve conditions in the countryside ultimately led to a new effort, the Stolypin reforms, in the early twentieth century.

Khrstoforov effectively sets the task of the reformers and the aims of key figures such as Nikolai Miliutin, Iurii Samarin, and Vladimir Cherkasskii against the backdrop of the influential ideologies that shaped their views. He convincingly argues that differences in the ideological platforms of the architects of reform—Slavophiles, liberals, technocrats—resulted in contradictions and vagueness in the legislation, as the authors attempted to iron out their differences and reach an agreement on the logistics of the law. This meant reconciling such disparate aims as turning former serfs into prosperous yeoman farmers, preserving the peasant commune and the existing rural order, and keeping state expenditure on reform to a minimum. The tensions and the silences in the law resulting from these uneasy compromises created obstacles to implementation and inspired a subsequent series of attempts at technocratic solutions. Meanwhile the disconnect grew ever greater between elites crafting reform legislation and the reality of everyday life for the rural people they sought to help.

This book will undoubtedly be of interest to intellectual and political historians of imperial Russia. But it also has much to offer the economic and social historian. Khrstoforov’s account places special emphasis on the role of institutions, or, in his words, “infrastructure.” He points out that the goal of turning former serfs into landowners was undermined by the absence of a system in Russia for assigning and enforcing property rights. More immediately, the imperfections in the land market caused by serfdom meant reformers could not easily assess the value of land awarded to the newly emancipated peasants. To get around this, the reformers had serfs buy themselves out of their future obligations, rather than pay for land, through a complex formula based on quitrent (*obrok*) values. (In other words, emancipated serfs were given land, but their redemption payments did not reflect land values; they were intended to compensate landlords for loss of labor or feudal rents.) These institutional shortcomings became even more acute in the postreform period, as the limits to communal land tenure and the legal isolation of the peasantry became more evident. Finally, Khrstoforov makes uncomfortably clear that the data collection efforts initiated by the state in this period were so questionable that those of us attempting to use quantitative data sources to draw empirical conclusions will have to tread very carefully indeed.

Khrstoforov is most persuasive on the ideological framework of reform. It is hardly fair to chide him for spending considerably less time on the more mundane constraints on reformers’ goals (state finances, domestic Realpolitik, the realities of rural life) as he makes the scope of his study quite explicit. However, “infrastructure” does play a role in his account—and creating (and maintaining) infrastructure is expensive. Thus one cannot help but wonder whether certain plans might have been shelved simply because their implementation would have been too costly. Similar questions arise regarding internal competition for state resources. What other reform projects were competing with peasant reform for state funding? Who were their advocates and how was the trade-off ultimately adjudicated? Such omissions do not in any way detract from the valuable contribution this book makes to our understanding of the process of reform in this period. On the contrary: these questions only arise in the first place because so much detailed light has been cast on the other aspects of reform that one feels impelled to push things further.

This indispensable book has clearly reframed the question of Russian rural reform in the imperial period and created a far-reaching new agenda for future research.

TRACY DENNISON  
California Institute of Technology

***Prazdnyi den', dosuzhii vecher: Kul'tura dosuga rossiiskogo provintsial'nogo goroda vtoroi poloviny XIX–nachala XX veka.*** By S. Iu. Malysheva. Moscow: Academia, 2011. 192 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Photographs. Hard bound.

This insightful book examines patterns of leisure in nineteenth-century Kazan. Using a wide range of sources, from Tatar poetry to postcards, Svetlana Malysheva draws a rich and detailed portrait of the Russian and Tatar leisure worlds of Kazan. Making use of English- and German-language theory on leisure as a form of communication, Malysheva suggests that leisure in Kazan served as a means for Russians and Tatars to learn about each other and thus was a force for social cohesion. She also notes the existence of contentious spaces, particularly on the frontier between the Tatar and Russian parts of towns, where traditional mass fist fights were held between the two groups. But this ritualized form of conflict seems, in the end, to have decreased rather than increased social tension.

Malysheva rightly notes that most of the earlier literature on her topic has either dealt with one form of leisure, such as reading or theater, for example, or with the leisure of particular groups, such as the working class or nobility. Her work encompasses all forms of leisure for all social groups within the town limits of Kazan. This shows how a provincial topic can make a real contribution to scholarship, as what is seemingly a more limited landscape actually allows for a wider view. It also suggests how important the use of theory is when confronting the infinite variability of the local, since the idea of leisure as communication helps to organize the material as well as make it speak to broader themes and a wider literature.

Beginning with an impressive overview of Russian, English, and German theory and literature on forms of leisure in Europe and Russia emphasizing its communicative function, Malysheva then fleshes out this theory in her first chapter, which explores how leisure in Kazan offered a way for Russians and Tatars to gain greater understanding of each other. Russian and Tatar holidays put ethnicity on display, providing a means for group self-identification as well as communication with other groups. The model is one of relatively harmonious parallel development rather than convergence. The second chapter provides an interesting look at how the state regulated leisure for different groups in order to create multiple leisure regimes, with the state playing the defining role. In particular, students and civil servants felt the impact of the state directives regarding leisure most forcefully, but the government's industrial policy also influenced workers' leisure, for example. The chapter notes a certain religious tension over designating Orthodox holidays as official days off, rather than Muslim holidays. The third chapter provides a variegated portrait of leisure within the six districts of Kazan, from the monumental center to the outlying workers' districts, including a section on prostitution as a male leisure practice. This is an innovative way to describe a provincial town, as many other approaches focus on architecture or work rather than leisure. Malysheva notes that segregation (by ethnicity, religion, gender, and so on) and hierarchy remained key throughout the nineteenth century, although homogenization and democratization also increased as a result of the commercialization of leisure. The fourth and final chapter describes the forms of leisure and notes the structuring role taboos played in the leisure practices